

# Rural & Frontier Health Division Update

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Welcome to the fourth issue of the "Rural and Frontier Health Division Update!" This newsletter is provided as an informational source on activities involving the programs and services within the division. Comments and/or suggestions are welcomed and may be addressed to [WDH-RFHD@health.wyo.gov](mailto:WDH-RFHD@health.wyo.gov).

## Annual Review of Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designations:

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has announced this review of HPSAs that were designated or last updated in 2004. The data and requirements we will gather and submit for Wyoming will include:

- Service area (defined, explained, and mapped)
- Population (source and other data used)
- Practitioners (number of full-time FTEs serving area or population group)
- Indicators of unusually high needs (source)
- Contiguous area resources (including over-utilization, excessive travel time, or other access barriers)
- Nearest source of non-designated care

The WDH's Office of Rural Health staff will be working this review which is due to be submitted to HRSA by May 1, 2009. For more information about HPSA criteria please visit: [www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage](http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage)

## Flex Evaluation:

Rural Health Solutions ([www.rhsnow.com](http://www.rhsnow.com)) recently completed an evaluation of the Wyoming Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex). The project was funded by the Wyoming Department of Health, Rural and Frontier Health Division, Office of Rural Health, Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Public Health Service, and Office of Rural Health Policy. The evaluation was conducted using key informant interviews, Critical Access Hospital (CAH) site visits, community healthcare provider surveys, and program documentation review. The evaluation can be viewed online at: <http://www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/index.html>. The ORH would like to thank all who participated in the interviews and surveys.

**Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program (CFDA 93.301):**

The Office of Rural Health Policy's Small Rural Hospital Improvement (SHIP) Grant Program provides funding to small rural hospitals to help them do any or all of the following: 1) pay for costs related to the implementation of the Prospective Payment System (PPS); 2) comply with provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA); and 3) reduce medical errors and support quality improvement. To be eligible for these grants, a hospital must be: (1) small is defined as 49 available beds or less, as reported on the hospital's most recently filed Medicare Cost Report; (2) rural is defined as located outside a [Metropolitan Statistical Area \(MSA\)](#); or located in a rural census tract of an MSA as determined under the Goldsmith Modification or the [Rural Urban Commuting Areas](#); and (3) hospital is defined as a non-Federal, short-term, general acute care facility. In addition, all designated Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) are eligible, as well as hospitals with fewer than 50 beds located in an area designated by any State law or regulation as a rural area or as a rural hospital. There is no requirement for matching funds with this program.

The 18 hospitals are:

Community Hospital (Torrington)  
Evanston Regional Hospital  
Johnson County Memorial  
Memorial Hospital of Converse County  
North Big Horn Hospital  
Powell Valley Hospital  
South Lincoln Medical Center  
Star Valley Hospital  
West Park Hospital

Crook County Memorial  
Hot Springs County Memorial  
Memorial Hospital of Carbon County  
Niobrara County Hospital District  
Platte County Memorial Hospital  
South Big Horn County Hospital  
St. John's Medical Center  
Washakie Medical Center  
Weston County Health Services

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*"ORH is working with  
doctoral candidate on  
research for her  
dissertation"*

**Rural Wyoming to Benefit from Research:**

Paulette Pardun, M Ed. CFCS, is working with the Office of Rural Health on research for her doctoral dissertation. Her research theme is *Quality Health Services in Wyoming Related to Rural Healthy People 2010: Primary Care*.

Research will be conducted through Spring 2009, and the dissertation will be completed by the end of the year. Paulette will interview providers and patients of existing Rural Health Clinics in determining barriers to primary care in rural Wyoming, and will formulate recommendations for ORH in assisting communities and individuals in overcoming those barriers.

**Rural Health Works:**

The Office of Rural Health is hosting Rural Health Works training on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, at the C'mon Inn Hotel in Casper. The National Center for Rural Health Works (RHW) presents two workshops each year based on demand and location, and Wyoming was chosen this year. Enrollment will be limited to 20 participants and will be on a "First Come, First Serve" basis. For additional information on the workshop, please visit [www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural](http://www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural) or [www.ruralhealthworks.org](http://www.ruralhealthworks.org).

**Vital Statistic Services:**

Births - Final Data for 2006: This information has been released by the National Center of Health Statistics (NCHS) of Centers for Disease Control and can be located at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

This latest national and territorial natality report shows increases in the number of births and birth fertility rates for nearly all age groups, race and origin groups, and reporting areas.

HOW DID WYOMING COMPARE? Wyoming births included 7,672 resident births in 2006, following a steady increase of births during the last five years. During the same time, the birth rate increased from 13.1 births per 1,000 population in 2002 to 14.9 in 2006.

<u>Measurement</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>WYOMING</u>
Birth Rate per 1,000 women	14.2	14.9
Birth Fertility Rate	68.5	75.9
Teenage Birth Rate (15-19 Yrs; births per 1,000 female age group)	41.9	47.3
Births to Unmarried Women	38.5%	33.0%
First Trimester Prenatal Care	69.0%	72.4%
Late or No Prenatal Care	7.9%	6.5%
Rates of Cesarean Delivery	31.1	26.2
Births Delivered Preterm	12.8%	12.8%
Births of Low Birthweight (less than 2500 grams)	8.3%	8.9%
Average Age of Mother at First Birth	25 Years	23 Years

**Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities:**

*Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) whose primary goal is to implement healthy eating and active living initiatives that can support healthier communities for children and families across the United States. The program places special emphasis on reaching children who are at highest risk for obesity on the basis of race/ethnicity, income and/or geographic location. This initiative will advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. Please click on the following link for information.

<http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=20603&c=EMC-FA138>

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*"The primary goal of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is to implement healthy eating"*

**Wyoming Office of Multicultural Health (WOMH):**

The WOMH has been working with the Multicultural Health Advisory Committee and subcommittees: Data, Education and Outreach, and Resources Sub-committees to implement the Health Disparity State Plan (HDSP) and the State Partnership Grant (SPG) goals and objectives.

Activities included:

- Drafting of the policies and procedures for special project applications and selection guidelines
- Responding to the Connect Wyoming proposal for Resource Network development
- Responding to the Wyoming Primary Care Association proposal for financial and special project management functions
- Drafting parameters for program evaluation and future enhancement recommendations
- Collaborating with the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division in preparation for a Trauma Informed System of Care Conference
- Collaborating with Tribal Health, Indian Health Services, and Fremont County agencies in the development of a Diversity Conference
- Updating the WOMH Web Site for resource expansion

**Community Services Programs:**

Ever wonder where the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) money goes? Here are some of the results of CSBG funding:

- In the CSBG grant funding year, Park County reduced the cost of chlamydia and gonorrhea STD testing from \$25 to \$10 for low-income high school and college students
- Low vision adaptive equipment was provided to enable six low-income Park County residents to learn new coping skills essential to daily living
- Crisis Intervention Services in Park County helped a young mother of three to gain custody of her children, get an apartment outside of the safe house environment, attain a part-time job, and enroll in college
- A client of Sheridan County's Advocacy and Resource Center now lives in her own home apart from her abusive ex-husband and, thanks to CSBG funding, is fully employed at a job with benefits
- Child Advocacy Services in Sheridan County brought a mother and her two teen-age children together in a home where the mother has now been employed for six months with a company that provides a good wage and benefits
- During the CSBG funding period, the Sheridan Free Clinic served 227 low-income persons with 1,136 patient visits
- The North Big Horn County Food Security provided food to 121 low-income people who would otherwise have been without food
- The Basin Food Pantry delivered a food basket to a family in need. The head of the family asked to volunteer in some way to "pay" for the food and was given the task of raking leaves. A neighbor saw him raking leaves, asked if he was in need of a job, and hired the man for a full-time permanent position
- An elderly woman in Big Horn County who was malnourished and without transportation is being provided in-home nutritious meals by the North Big Horn Senior Center.

- A young mother of 3 came to the Gillette Abuse Refuge Center to escape an abusive life. After a year in drug court to overcome a habit of drug abuse, she enrolled in, and completed, the CLIMB Wyoming program and secured a stable, good paying job. She now works full time, maintains her own residence, and has full custody of her three children.

As the old TV show told us, there are a million stories... these are but a few of the ways that CSBG funding is improving lives in Wyoming communities.

### **End Stage Renal Program:**

These are the current statistics for the Transplant waiting list for Wyoming and Colorado.

	All Organs	Kidney	Liver	Pancreas	Kidney / Pancreas	Heart	Lung	Heart / Lung
Candidates	1,802	1,155	470	36	26	35	118	2

Data subject to change based on future data submission or correction. Totals may be less than the sums due to patients included in multiple categories.

### **Recent News from Rural Assistance Center:**

#### **Pharmacists in Demand Across U.S.**

[http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/business/stories/2008/11/30/wrk\\_pharmacists-bizplus.ART\\_ART\\_11-30-08\\_D3\\_29C28HH.html?sid=101](http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/business/stories/2008/11/30/wrk_pharmacists-bizplus.ART_ART_11-30-08_D3_29C28HH.html?sid=101)

Dec 1, 2008 -- Columbus Dispatch, (OH) article reports that pharmacists are in short supply across the country, particularly in rural areas, and competition among retail outlets and health-care facilities is fierce, and the pay -- salaries typically start around \$120,000 -- is high.

#### **CMS Issues New FAQs on Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor Program**

[http://medicareupdate.typepad.com/medicare\\_update/2008/11/cms-issues-new-faqs-on-medicare-recovery-audit-contractor-program.html](http://medicareupdate.typepad.com/medicare_update/2008/11/cms-issues-new-faqs-on-medicare-recovery-audit-contractor-program.html)

Nov 26, 2008 -- On November 25, 2008, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) posted new [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) pertaining to the Medicare [Recovery Audit Contractor \(RAC\) Program](#), including FAQs involving critical access hospitals and physician evaluation and management (E&M) services.

#### **Medicare Advantage Plans Muddy the Water, Do Not Improve Care but Cost More, New Studies Find**

<http://www.seniorjournal.com/NEWS/Medicare/2008/20081124-MedicareAdvantagePlans.htm>

Nov 25, 2008 -- Senior Journal article tells of a series of three reports in *Health Affairs* that found that the extra cost of the Medicare Advantage plans have provided senior citizens more alternative ways to receive Medicare benefits, but they have also created more complexity, while generating negligible gains in quality.

## **House Stimulus Proposal Contains Dollars for Rural Programs**

<http://www.dailyyonder.com/house-stimulus-proposal-contains-dollars-rural-programs/2009/01/15/1849>

Jan 16, 2009 -- Daily Yonder article discusses how House Democrats Thursday revealed an [\\$825 billion stimulus plan](#) that combined spending and tax cuts as well as designating spending specifically aimed at rural areas.

## **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: Working for Rural Behavioral Health**

[http://www.raconline.org/news/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=10356](http://www.raconline.org/news/news_details.php?news_id=10356)

Jan 14, 2009 -- In collaboration with the Health Resources & Services Administration's Office of Rural Health Policy, and the Nakamoto Group, Inc., the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Mental Health Program is working to identify promising practices, best practices, models that work, and evidence based practices in rural behavioral health.

## **USDA Rural Development Invites Applications for Rural Economic Development Funding**

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/2009/2-09%20REDLG%20NOFA%20news%20release%2020090112.pdf>

Jan 13, 2009 -- Agriculture Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development Douglas L. Faulkner announced today that USDA is accepting applications for \$45.8 million in loans and grants to support rural communities and spur economic development through the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program.

## **Funding Issues:**

### **Homeless Education Disaster Assistance Program**

[http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding\\_details.php?funding\\_id=2054](http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding_details.php?funding_id=2054)

Application deadline: Feb 9, 2009

Grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) or consortia of LEAs located within the same State whose enrollment of homeless students has increased as a result of a natural disaster that occurred in calendar year 2008.

### **Communities Creating Healthy Environments**

[http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding\\_details.php?funding\\_id=2062](http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding_details.php?funding_id=2062)

Application deadline: Feb 26, 2009

Funding to prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy foods and safe places to play in communities of color.

### **STOP Hunger Scholarships**

[http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding\\_details.php?funding\\_id=2050](http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding_details.php?funding_id=2050)

Application deadline: Feb 27, 2009

Scholarships to recognize and reward the great steps students are taking to fight hunger in our communities across the United States.

## **Upcoming Events:**

- 2009 National Association for State Community Services Programs Mid-Winter Conference, Feb. 2-6, 2009, Washington, D.C.
- Rural Health Clinics Forum, April 6-8, 2009, Lakewood, CO
- Holistic Approach to Wellness Conference, April 24-25, Lander, WY
- NRHA Annual Conference, May 5-8, 2009, Miami Beach, FL
- Critical Access Hospital Conference, October 7-9, Portland, OR

## **We're on the Web!**

See us at:

[www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd](http://www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd)